

As a member of the State house in 1972, I was enthusiastic about the creation of the ombudsman's office. I had gone from political science student to state legislator and was beginning to appreciate the value of government oversight in the practical world. It is one thing to study political theory and have a concept of how things should work. It is another thing to represent citizens as their elected representative and see how things really work. The Federal constitution Framers knew what they were doing when they built in checks and balances among the three branches of government.

The decision to create a State ombudsman wasn't unanimous. The house vote was 70 to 28, the Senate vote 30 to 20. Then, as now, those who perform government oversight might have been seen as skunks at a picnic, fueling fears of those who might abuse their investigative powers or among agencies, rein in their power. Inspectors general and whistleblowers at Federal agencies are regularly eyed with suspicion or targeted for retaliation. I run into this at the Federal level all the time. Sometimes the executive branch tries to stifle inspectors general or Federal employees who have reports of wrongdoing. Yet those people are very often heroes who expose waste, fraud, and abuse, and by putting themselves on the line, get problems fixed and strengthen government. They deserve honor and protection, which I work to provide. And I conduct oversight of Federal agencies, just as the voters oversee my performance as their elected representative.

By all accounts I have heard, Bill Angrick served his oversight role with the honor, diligence, and integrity envisioned by those of us who created the State ombudsman's office.

His retirement provides a good opportunity to reflect on his work and on the role of an entity that exists to listen to citizens, investigate concerns, and render findings in the spirit of fixing shortcomings for public benefit. The office exists to perform oversight of State and local government agencies. Sometimes it initiates investigations upon a citizen phone call of concern or complaint. It receives thousands of inquiries every year. Occasionally, my staff in Iowa adds to the workload, referring cases to the ombudsman that deal exclusively with State and local government. I appreciate the careful consideration given in those instances. Other times, the ombudsman's staff sees the need for an investigation of an agency's interaction with a citizen over a particular case or multiple agencies' handling of a State matter that is either complex or has fallen through the cracks. As a third party, the ombudsman's office is charged with the responsibility of examining the facts as impartially and thoroughly as possible and rendering findings and recommendations in a thoughtful, constructive way. The office is removed from the emotions and biases of the

people involved and proceeds without a predisposition toward a certain outcome.

The workload can involve an issue with broad implications, such as State and local governments' treatment of prison inmates, and response to child abuse cases. Mr. Angrick's office reviewed whether inmates were held too long in restraining chairs and whether government procedures were adequate to protect children in violent circumstances. The office has given special attention over the years to State and local governments' treatment of mentally ill and disabled citizens. Mr. Angrick recognizes that some challenges are interwoven among segments of society and government and merit a comprehensive response. For example, he has given needed understanding of and exposure to the fact that State prisons have become de facto housing for mentally ill citizens in many cases. He is right that government has to address this situation and give appropriate treatment to those who can't advocate for themselves.

The ombudsman's workload also involves cases with a more narrow focus. A recent investigation covered a city street superintendent accused of using city equipment on his own property and retaliating against a citizen who complained while local elected officials stood by. The resolution of that dispute might not resonate statewide, but it is meaningful for the residents of a community who expect their city employees to function aboveboard and expect their elected officials to enforce city rules and regulations. The office serves as a check-and-balance backstop on potential abuse of power.

However, the ombudsman's office doesn't only conclude that the government is wrong. Sometimes it affirms that government agencies acted properly, as in 2004 when it concluded that the Iowa Department of Natural Resources' investigation of three Asian markets for unlawful fish sales was fair and reasonable.

The citizens aide office is open to everyone, regardless of position and station in life. That equal voice for everyone is critical to its purpose and its success. Under Mr. Angrick's leadership, a prison inmate's call is taken respectfully and with care for the facts, the same as a mayor's call. Mr. Angrick recognizes that a prisoner should not be abused and is entitled to humane, compassionate treatment and certain rights as he pays his debt to society. This is not only the right way to treat our fellow human beings, but it also contributes to a stronger civic structure. If the prison inmate feels heard, he may leave his service with a greater regard for society and the rule of law than he did going into prison. He might not commit a crime the second time.

By holding the government accountable, the ombudsman's office builds faith in State and local civic institutions. A well-functioning government

in which citizens have a voice, are heard, and affect change is the best antidote to cynicism about government. My strong impression is that Bill Angrick and his staff accomplished the simple slogan of their office: "Dedicated to Making Good Government Better." I thank Bill Angrick for his 32 years of service to the people of Iowa.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

GREENVILLE SCOTTISH GAMES

• Mr. DEMINT. Mr. President, this year marks the fourth annual celebration of the Greenville Scottish Games in my hometown of Greenville, SC. South Carolina's upstate boasts one of the highest concentrations of Scots-Irish descendants in the country and these games pay tribute to that rich Celtic heritage.

Since their inception in 2006, the Greenville Scottish Games have received international acclaim from the Standing Council of Scottish Chiefs which has recognized them as one of the finest games in the world.

This year's event brings with it yet another historic milestone, with His Royal Highness, The Prince Edward, Earl of Wessex, in attendance. This is the first known time a senior member of the British Royal Family has attended a games outside of Scotland, and it is my great honor to extend an official senatorial welcome to His Royal Highness. I am confident he will experience the finest of Palmetto State hospitality as the first member of the Royal Family to ever visit Greenville.

These tremendous distinctions have been achieved under the tireless leadership of Dee Benedict, president of the Greenville Scottish Games. With Dee's vision and tenacity, along with the help of local officials, businesses and countless volunteers, no detail has gone untouched, ensuring that every part of this exciting weekend will evoke a feeling of authentic Scottish clan life.

I am immensely proud that my hometown is the site of this celebration and I am honored to congratulate everyone who has partnered together to make the Fourth Annual Greenville Scottish Games a sure success.●

75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE WAYNE STATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

• Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, it is with great honor that I recognize the 75th anniversary of the School of Social Work at Wayne State University. Since 1935, this fine institution has provided students in Michigan and across the Nation with the skills necessary to tackle some of the toughest challenges we face as a society. The theme of the anniversary celebration is "Advancing Knowledge, Community Engagement,